2: Hutchinson E-4, 5 (1950-1951) 1957 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11

VILA RECÔNCAVO

[The Private Plantation]

249*
178
466

life, and Seu Paulo resents the continued presence of the owner and the consequent lessening of his authority.

Along with their feeling of pride and love for the Recôncavo, many landowners recognize clearly the difficulties with which they are faced. The following excerpt from the diary of Dona Sinhá, which I was allowed to read, illustrates the outlook of a sugar-cane planter of the Recôncavo:

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. . . "Dona Sinhá, there is a man here looking for you." "What is it, my son?" "I have some boils coming out all over my body." Some sulfa and a little ointment do the trick, and just in time, for here comes Seu Paulo, the overseer.

"The oxen of Pedras, the neighboring plantation, invaded the cane fields last night. Also those of Seu Cosme." "I'll telephone the usina immediately." "Also, there are no wagons at the loading point." "I'll find out about that too."

The tractor driver comes, complaining that there is no oil. I get that from the storeroom. Now there are two men on the veranda wanting to know about the last payday, when they claim their money "came out wrong." Going through the pay sheets, that was straightened out.

249*
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178

Now, while there is no one else, I'll go out and look over the fields. I look at the plantings, feel the earth which I love. But it doesn't satisfy me. Something is missing. We are backward and retrogressing, passively. This place puts an inertia in the heart of a person, a desire to stop fighting, to find everything fine and as it should be--the ragamuffin Negroes, poorly fed, ignorant and rude, their dirty children with protruding stomachs and the white pretending that there is progress, his house full of company, electricity, radio, telephone, horseback rides, poetry of Baudelaire, Verlaine, philosophy of Voltaire, Carlyle, etc. --but in the end, zero! Sometimes I feel a tremendous anguish, I feel that nothing can be done in the Recôncavo and I want to leave this paralyzed land, poisoned with tradition, with its ruined sobrados. And we today hold fast to these fantasies and want to relive the opulent past. Deep down there is a clash against these indefatigable overseers, mulattoes, and Negroes with their boots, senhores da fazenda.

the lower classes fail to have at least some knowledge of the ceremonial. In a region where there is little entertainment, such as in the town of Vila Recôncavo and especially in the rural area, the cults provide a major spectator activity, and those who have been exposed to it through their lives appreciate it as such. The number of active participants, however, is small. The house which is functioning in the town has about two dozen initiates, while the rural house is somewhat larger, having about forty-five devotees, only seven of whom are drawn from the plantation on which the house is situated. The rural house is more active for several reasons, according to local informants: the costumes are prettier, and therefore people prefer to dance there; the cult leader is a stronger personality and a better healer than the leader of the town house. The rural house is also more conveniently located for people from the surrounding plantations. Nevertheless, the small number of participants is indicative of the weakness of the institution in this area as a whole.

Healing, however, does play an important part in the cult activities, for the zelador who has "made his saint" has usually learned a large number of ritual and herbal cures. In fact, it is the healing aspect which brings most people to the cult activities. Sick persons, however, generally prefer to entrust themselves first to the ministrations of the plantation owner, plantation nurse, or town doctor. But if they feel they are not being helped, they turn to the cult house. If the sickness is diagnosed by the cult leader as a clear sign that the person is in contact with a spirit, the patient must enter the rites as an initiate or suffer the consequences. But for the ordinary run of headaches, stomach troubles, and skin eruptions, the cult leader draws upon his knowledge of herbal remedies. This knowledge is supposed to come from his deity, who often is St. Roch in this area, and who knows the cure. In fact, the leader of the rural house once compared his establishment with a pharmacy. He is paid for these medical services. Often one hears a person wishing that he could "have" such-and-such a saint so he would know how to cure and be able to make money, as do the cult leaders.

It is a general opinion that cult leaders are financially well off, although they themselves staunchly declare that they are not and that they must live from alms. As a rule all the participants in a house are obliged to contribute to the ceremonial honoring the leader's deity, which is usually the most extravagant ceremonial of the house.

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184
[152]

er of the Waters. Naturally, in such a small group, the secret is not very well kept and it is soon known who has sent a present, why, and when. Many people in this group, and some in Class A, entertain the fear that they may become themselves possessed by a deity, especially if they expose themselves to cult activities during a ceremony, and for this reason they do not attend the rituals. To a certain extent this fear is the basis for the protest many of them make against night-long drumming, although the common complaint is that they cannot sleep because of the noise. The sound of the drums at night is very impressive, and no one is unaware that nearby the supernatural is being called. It is very disturbing to those who do not understand the mechanics of the ceremonies and the meaning of the drumming and sacrifices.

Spiritualism

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787

Spiritualism, which does not use drums, is as disturbing as cultism to people of all classes, although because of its quieter character it is not always known when a session is taking place. Spiritualism seems to be gaining popularity in the area, although it is greatly feared by many people. It is slowly gaining adherents, however, because of the healing powers exhibited by the mediums. In most cases people are drawn to it, both in the town and in the rural area, through illness and the promise of a cure. Because of lack of aid from the doctor, or because of the expense of medical treatment, or perhaps because of the failure of the African cult to cure him, a patient may try spiritualism as a last resort. For those who are helped by it, it becomes a constant companion, and although they may have entered with fear, they soon lose it. They become staunch defenders and try to draw in their friends. The greatest successes in curing seem to follow the herbal treatments of the African cultists, but spiritualism requires no further obligations, as do the cults. It is common to hear someone say that attendance at a spiritualist seance cured him of some minor ailment and left him free of obligations, and that he did not even have to pay the medium. Spiritualism is also used to discover and counteract the evil eye and evil machinations of any enemy. In spiritualism one finds the same Indian spirits which are found in the local African cults, although no dancing is involved. There is now definite competition between the mediums and the cult leaders for adherents.

[757]
[776]
[177]
[798]

4: Pierson Z-4, 5 (1935-1937) 1967
SOll Bahia Brazilians SOll

ing the *bozó* in a place where the intended victim is likely to step on it or otherwise touch it.[33] An animal may be "prepared with the *ebó*" so that whoever subsequently touches the animal will catch the illness or inherit the misfortune. If, however, one wishes to avoid transferring the evil to another person, he may do so and still rid himself of his affliction by leaving the *ebó* in a cemetery.

If a *filha de santo* (ceremonial dancer of the fetish cult) would avoid illness or other misfortune, it is considered highly important that she observe all the taboos, especially those attaching to food and drink. A pregnant woman must avoid vegetables and all meats other than chicken; she must not join a funeral procession, since the spirit of the deceased might enter her child; and she must avoid a rose touching her bare breast, for otherwise the child, it is believed, will be born with a birthmark.[33]

Charms may be of a specific nature like the *figa*[34] or the

[33] The affliction may, however, be transferred to someone toward whom no harm was originally intended if the individual placing the *ebó*, either ignorantly or with intention, fails to leave it in the designated place. The first person coming in physical contact with it will be affected. So widespread is this fear of the *ebó* that chauffeurs, even at the risk of an accident, will not run a wheel over one.

[33] Current folk medicines include: for syphilis, whale oil; for a toothache, pig or burro dung smoked in a clay pipe; for a cough, sweetened tea prepared by boiling a termite nest; for sore throat, tea made by boiling a live lizard whose body is then removed from the vessel and buried with its head toward the new moon. Native herbs are extensively employed, particularly by *curandeiros*, or they may be administered at the hands of anyone "instructed" by a "manifesting" deity, a common occurrence in those *candomblés* known as *de caboclo* (a portion of whose ritual is probably of native Indian origin) and in spiritualist centers like that in Alto do Bom Gosto, in Calcada, one of whose directors remarked, "So many *caboclos* 'manifest themselves' because they know so well how to heal with herbs."

[34] The *figa* is an image, usually made from wood, of a closed fist with the thumb inserted between the index and middle fingers.

[SALVADOR]

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*563 829 The Whites justify their opposition to marriages with Blacks, not only by ideologies concerning the mental and moral inferiority of the Black, but also by an "instinctive" repulsion to certain organic characteristics of Africans and their close descendants. A mulatto, reared among Europeans, expresses this attitude by saying that "it is not so much the color prejudice that is strong in Bahia as the instinctive repulsion of the white race for the taint of the sister race when it is pure or almost pure: bad odor, color, etc., which does not fail to provoke disagreeable comments about the descendants of Ham." It should be noted that, *563 829 828 147 concerning the "bad odor," that of the Blacks is regarded as something inherent in their nature and thus irremediable, the disagreeable odor of the Portuguese and the other immigrants being attributed solely to the lack of body care. This conception puts the Black in a special and inferior psychological category, many Whites not knowing that they themselves emit an odor intolerable to the Asiatics and to the Blacks (1).

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1. It is interesting to note what happens in blood transfusion. When this was done directly from donor to recipient, often the white patient or his family preferred white donors, showing annoyance when the donor was mulatto or black. At present, with the system of preserved blood, almost no one asks what the "quality" of the donor is, except Jews and certain foreigners, especially Europeans who demand blood from members of their family or their "race." In the first instance, what motivated the attitude of the Whites was above all the fact that the donor was lying in a bed parallel to that of the sick person, a situation recalling the intimacy of two persons who sleep side by side.